

of the Act so far as the same are applicable, and to authorise us, or the Waiariki Maori Land Board, to execute proper deeds on behalf of the Native proprietors. We have asked the solicitor for the company to prepare for our perusal a draft agreement, and we propose then to submit all the facts and the draft deed for Your Excellency's consideration and approval.

There was also brought under our notice a proposal to lease timber areas on the Tautara and Rotoma Blocks to three Maoris, themselves owners in the blocks. The owners were unanimous in asking that the proposal be given effect to. We inquired into all the circumstances, and are satisfied that the transaction should be approved and carried into effect. The lessees have some capital to invest in the erection of the necessary plant and the construction of tramways and roads. The lease will affect the timber area only, estimated at 7,000 acres. The timber will be cut in sections, so as to allow the utilisation of the land for pastoral purposes as early as possible. The parties will submit to us a draft agreement containing the detailed proposals, which will then be available for Your Excellency's consideration.

The area of land affected by these timber agreements is as follows :—

	A.	B.	P.
Waiteti No 2, Section 1A	455	0	16
„ parts Sections 1B and 2A	2,094	0	0
Okoheriki 2c (part)	4,078	0	0
Rotoma and Tautara	*7,000	0	0
	13,627	0	16

There are other blocks containing valuable milling-timber in this district. We give a list of some of them here :—

Rotoiti Nos. 3, 4, 5, and 6	Portions.
Te Haumingi	About one-third.
Kaitao	About one-fourth.
Rotohokahoka C and D	About 800 acres.

The Maori owners ask that they be permitted to dispose of the timber before these lands are cut up into farms for lease or Maori occupation. We think that their wishes should have due consideration, and that some method should be devised under the Act of 1881 by which this valuable timber may be made available to the general public on terms most advantageous to the owners, and permitting to them a measure of control over the arrangements. Our suggestions at the end of this report have been framed in this direction. To either sell or lease the timber lands for settlement purposes, making the destruction of the timber a necessity, as has been done on so much land of the Dominion, would in our opinion be an act of criminal waste. The lands on which timber suitable for milling grows are yearly decreasing, and at no distant date such lands near to population will be unknown. There is, therefore, much need of conserving the limited timber land, and of seeing that it is properly utilised. Even if settlement has to wait, it is better that it should wait than that valuable timber, worth in some cases from £5 to £10 per acre, should be cut down and burnt to afford feed after grassing for one or two sheep per acre. The waste of such a procedure does not require to be pointed out.

The lands owned by the Ngati-Pikiao Tribe, situated generally to the north and south of the Rotoiti, Rotoehu, and Rotoma Lakes, are perhaps the most valuable of the Rotorua lands, and the most suitable in our opinion for pastoral purposes. But the titles to many of them are in an unsatisfactory position. There are few blocks which have taken up so much of the time of the Court as Rotoiti and Taheke upon investigation of title. The subdivisions are not yet complete, and expensive surveys will be necessary to complete the titles.

Incorporation.

The Ngati-Pikiao have made up their minds to adopt incorporation, and have asked us in almost every case to recommend that their lands be incorporated under section 28 of “The Maori Land Claims Adjustment and Laws Amendment Act, 1907.” They are willing to throw open their lands for settlement through com-

* Approximate, out of 11,719 acres.